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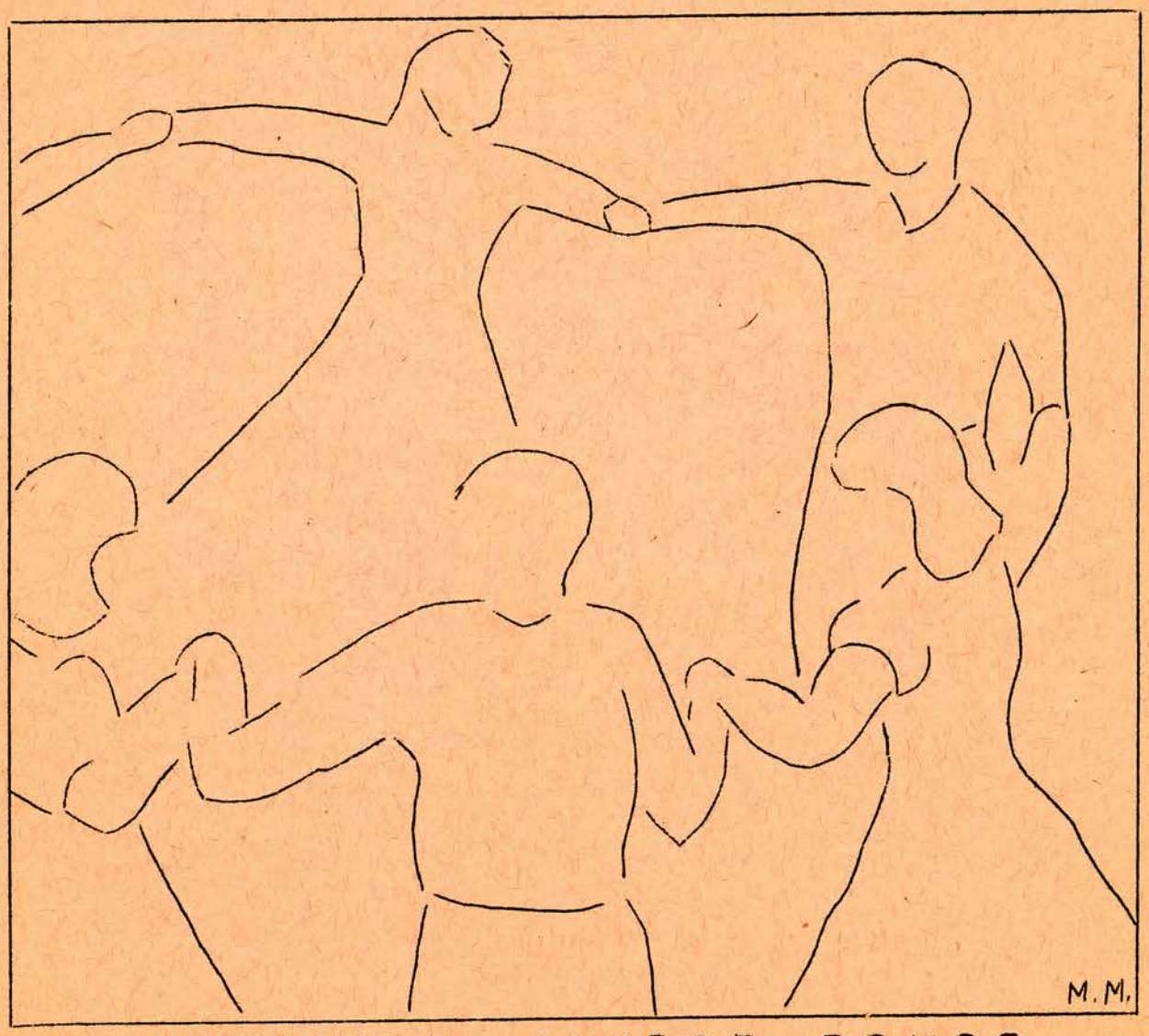
PROMENADE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE

Volume VIII Issue 6



THE AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, and general Americana which comprise American folk culture; to conduct activities without regard to race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views."

Constitution of the A.S.D.G.

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When members of the ASDG discover a "new" branch of folklore they generally become completely involved in its study. Our latest love is Catalan folklore, and a whole new world of dances, songs, language, customs, and people has been opened to us.

It all started when the Catalan Society of New York asked the Library of Congress to recommend an American folk dance group and the Library suggested us.

We were to learn a simple dance with the Society's assistance "in the special characteristics of the dance." And we were to perform it in Catalonian costumes in the Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana held last October.

In this way young American dancers were able to express the sympathy of our people for the Catalan people, whose culture and spirit refuse to be crushed.

We felt that, in order to have real sympathy for the Catalonians, we had to know something about them. Catalonia is in the northeastern part of Spain with Barcelona as an important seaport and textile center. The Catalonians have a language of their own. It has an inspiring history. The Jocs Florals is a literary festival which dates back to the XIV century. (Since 1939 the festival has been held in different cities of the world, and this year the New York Society sponsored it. In a later issue we will present a detailed description of the festival, for there is not room enough to do justice to its symbolism and pageantry.)

All we can say now is that we are still under the spell, still trying to learn as much as we can about Catalonia, and still hoping that some day soon we can dance a Sardana with enough "special characteristics" to please our Catalan friends.

Margot

THE WAGONER'S LAD

This song, known and sung in one version or another in many regions of our country, was collected by Margot from the singing of her cousin Lulu Crisp. Lulu, wife of our favorite banjo-picker, Rufus, lives in Allen, Kentucky. The song was notated by Margot in the summer of 1934.

1. I tune up my fiddle, I rosin my bow,
   I make myself welcome wherever I go.

2. "Pretty Polly, Pretty Polly, would you think it unkind
   Fer me to sit beside you and tell you my mind?

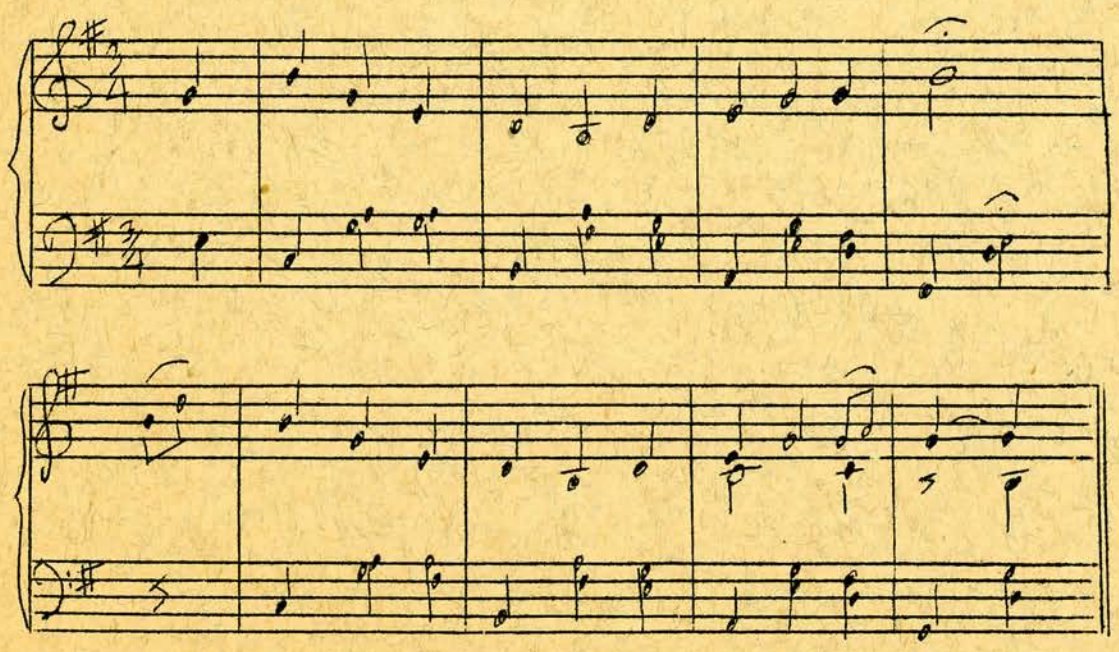
3. My mind is to marry, no never to part,
   Fare ye well, Pretty Polly, you've wounded my heart.

4. Your parents don't like me, they say I'm too poor*
   They say I'm not worthy to enter yore door."

5. "Oh, put up yore hosses and feed them some hay."
   "Fare ye well, Pretty Polly, I'll feed on the way.

6. My hosses ain't hungry, they won't eat yore hay,
   Fare ye well, Pretty Polly, I'm going away."

* Cousin Luly explained to me that she had to change the pronunciation of poor (which everyone knows should be pronounced to rhyme with purr) in order to make it rhyme with door.



This piano arrangement was made by Gladys Mayo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Library of Congress is offering thirty "Songs of the Chippewa Indians" in both 33-1/3 and 78 rpm speeds. Order from Recording laboratory, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C. The 33-1/3 rpm recording costs $4.50, the 78 rpm recording costs $8.50. A catalog listing the complete folk music series is available for only 10¢ from the Recording Laboratory.

New Records, Inc. is working on a Music in America series of recordings which attempts to include all the many types of music ever heard in America. The twelve recordings to be issued during 1951 can be obtained only by subscribing to the entire series. For $60 it includes early composed music (both religious and secular) and folk music. The director of the project is Karl Krueger, the editors are Carleton Sprague Smith and Leroy Robertson. For further information write to

New Records, Inc.
141 East 44 Street
New York 17, N.Y.

Sam Eskin sings a group of folk songs on a single 10-inch long-playing record for $4.60. Included in this new collection are "Farmer's Curst Wife," "Green Grow the Lilacs", "24th of Feb" and a variety of other folk songs. For information write to

Sounds of Our Times
Ridgeway Station
Stamford, Conn.

People's Artists, Inc. offers a new folk song magazine called Sing Out! for $2.00 per year. Free sample copies are available to subscribers. Sing Out! includes contemporary topical songs as well as folk songs. Write to

People's Artists, Inc.
799 Broadway
New York 3, N.Y.

A new folklore publication is out called "Folk Dance Guide." We think Paul Schwartz, the editor is making a good start with his first issue when he includes a directory of folk and square dance groups and classes in the New York area and a good dance bibliography. The editor's aim is to present authentic folk dance material for use by dancers and teachers. For information write to

Folk Dance Guide
c/o Paul Schwartz
Box 342 Cooper Station
New York 3, N.Y.

RECENT RELEASES

Ralph Tefferteller and the Rangers, Kismet Record Co. #145 (with calls), Kismet Record Co.#146 (instrumental).

Featuring "Catch All Eight" with a "Tennessee Running Set" on the turn-over side, this new release will be an excellent addition to the library of any group sufficiently skilled to follow the slightly involved calls. The 145, which has "Teffy" doing the calls himself, is not too good because of an imperfect recording. Any degree of amplification turns the music harsh and blurry, while "Teffy's" fine style just does not seem to show up to any advantage. The "Tennessee Running Set" is an attempt to get a Southern style of dance nailed down on a disk. It isn't as successful as "Teffy's" admirers, and we are among the many, would wish.

The 146 is a much better recording and the music will withstand amplification and repetition. The calls that are furnished with this disk are the ones that "Teffy" uses on the 145 and while the "Tennessee Running Set" isn't very much, the calls for "Catch All Eight" are interesting and should provide for a few confused sessions before the dancers master the dance.

G. S.

----R U N N I N G S E T F I G U R E S----

These figures were collected by group member Joe Bossom in Highlands, North Carolina. He learned them from the caller and guitarist, Donald Keene.

Formation: A large circle of partners, with an even number of couples.
Music: Any Southern tune, but "Turkey Buzzard" will do."

"Wagon Wheel"

CALLS:
1) All promenade
2) Gents form the wagon wheel
3) Gents out, the ladies in, form that wagon wheel again.
4) Swing your honey round and round,
   'Til the hollow of her foot makes a hole in the ground.
   All promenade, she's only ninety in the shade.

Descriptions:
1) All partners in promenade position (left hand in left hand, right in right, with right arms over left.) All move counter-clockwise in a circle.

2) All gents move toward the center of the circle, joining left hands to form the spokes of the wheel. Their right hands still hold their partners' left hands. The ladies extend their right hands directly forward.

3) Ladies move forward in front of their partners, gents moving backward, and partners exchange places, so that the ladies are in the center with their right hands joined. All move clockwise.

4) Ladies drop hands and partners swing. Partners promenade counter-clockwise until the next call.

"Georgia Back-Step"

CALLS:
1) Odds off to evens.
2) Right hands in, and all go forward in a right hand star.
3) All move backward, just the way you are.
4) Left to your partner for a do-si-do.
   Chicken in the bread pan, pecking out dough.
   Granny, does your dog bite? No, chile, no!
   Briar on your thumb, thorn in your toe,
   Granny, does your dog bite? No, chile, no!

Descriptions:
1) Have gents in each couple count off, and all odd numberd couples move to the even couples on their right.

2) All dancers in each set of two couples, join right hands, forming a star and all take four steps forward, clockwise.

3) All move four steps backward, counter-clockwise, without changing hands.

4) Partners join left hands and turn once around. The two gents in each set pass back to back and join right hands with the opposite ladies, turning them once around. Gents return, back to back, and turn partners with a left hand turn. Repeat.

"Bread and Butter"

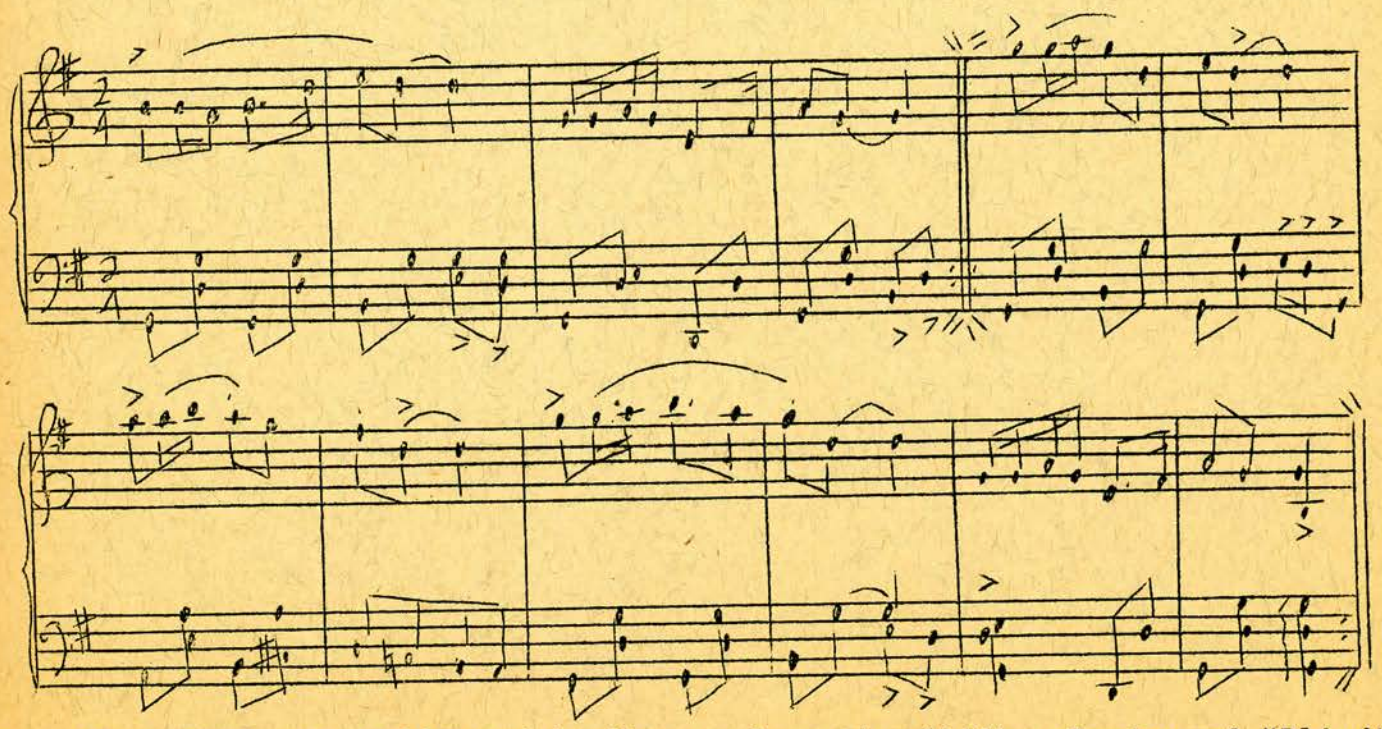
CALLS:
1) Odd couples off for a "bread and butter."
2) Swing your corner lady,
3) And now your own little baby.
4) Odd couples on to the next and double up four
   And dance some more.

Description:
1) Dancers of the odd couple join right hands and turn one complete turn. Then they move around the even couple, the odd lady to her right, the odd gent to his left, meeting behind the even couple. The dancers of the odd couple join right hands and turn a half-turn around, so that the lady is on her partner's right. The odd couple moves between the even. The even couple stands still during the entire figure. The dancers of the odd couple, on reaching their original places, join their right hands and turn a half-turn into place facing the even couple.

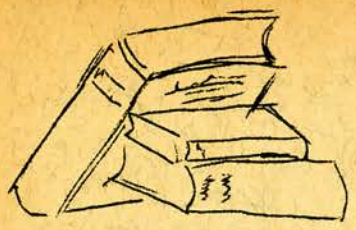
NOTE:
These figures, and many more of the Running Set, can be "tied" together with such figures as "All circle left, and back to the right," "All promenade" and much swinging of partners and corners. The corner lady is the lady on the gent's left, or his opposite lady when two couples dance together. Each of these "Odds off" figures may be repeated as often as desired, by having the odd couples move on to the next even couple,until all couples have danced together. Then a new figure may be introduced,or a figure described above, performed by all the dancers in the circle.

We have printed many of the Running Set calls in previous issues of this magazine. A complete chapter of this dance appears in Margot's book "The American Square Dance", published by Sentinel Books, New York.

T U R K E Y B U Z Z A R D



The tune above was collected by Margot from the fiddle playing of "Blind" Ollie Myers, of Cades Cove, Tenn. It was arranged for piano by Aileen Mayo.



SQUARE DANCES

By Ralph J. McNair
Garden City Books, Garden City, New York, 1951

I read it and was I amazed. This book is a mixture of ultra-modern patter calls and 19th century background material. The patter is similar to that being used in the Western Square Dance fad that we in New York are experiencing at this time. In this form of call the caller never stops talking but reels out a continuos stream of words in an effort to drown out the music. Some of Mr. McNair's patter is worthwhile poetry, but I draw the line at such gems as: "Leave her standing by the whiffle tree. On to the next and circle three," "Leave that gal with her chaperone and you meander home alone."

Instead of giving background information of the era in which his book is written, Mr. McNair for the most part talks about the days of the quadrille and mentions references to the country dance in English literature as far back as 1593. His purpose in this, says the book jacket blurb is to capture "the flavor of the Square Dance and its early beginnings in the Western mining camps, the New England barns, the Kentucky mountains, and the Texas cattle drives. Here is the spirit of those who rebelled at the formality of the quadrille to give us the American Square Dance."

In one section of the book the author presents his idea of a callers heaven "an immense celestial library with shelf upon shelf of books, each volume devoted to the history of one particular square dance." There, "he (the caller) might take down the volume marked 'Right Hand Star' to find an early antecedent in the French Moulinet or an even earlier reference to this figure in the country dance of sixteenth century England.

Over three dozen dances are clearly presented with calls and anecdote, but without music. The author uses the device of naming couples which has some advantages for the description of figures.

Another unusual thing about "Square Dances" by McNair is the bibliography. One might expect to find mention of the latest of Square Dance manuals but, to the contrary, the bibliography is arranged chronologically from "A Treatise on the Art of Dancing by Gallini," published in 1792 to "Clendenen's Fashional Quadrille Call Book," printed in 1889.

Bob Krebs

WHAT'S DOIN'

The New Yorker Magazine is publishing a series of articles on the Country Dance Society of America and Cue Magazine, we are informed, is announcing square dance activities in the metropolitan area.

ASDG is short of girls. Know any?

Three new record companies have been formed to specialize in square and folk dance recordings--in Phoenix, Arizona, Western Jubile and Smart Records, and in New Jersey, Guyden Records.

There is square or folk dancing every day of the week in New York. On Mondays you can go to the Grand Central YMCA on Forty-seventh Street between Second and Third Avenues for dances called by Shorty Williams. Eugene Tso instructs folk dances at the Joan of Arc Junior High School on Ninety-third Street near Amsterdam Avenue on Tuesdays. On Wednesdays the Country Dance Society of America meets at the Duane-Methodist Church, Thirteenth Street and Seventh Avenue. Dick Kraus is in charge of the dancing at the Ninty-second Street YMHA on Thursday evenings. Your correspondent holds forth at the Clara de Hirsch Residence Club, 225 East Sixth-third Street,

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every Friday. On Saturdays the New York Square Dance Workshop meets at the Community Church, 40 East Thirty-fifth Street. The American Square Dance Group meets on Sunday afternoons in George Chaffee's Studio, 139 West Fifty-sixth Street.

These are a few examples, and in the future issues we will add a more complete list.

B. K.

ASDG NEWS

Bob Williams has completed his air police training at Camp Gordan and is now off to California for further training as a prisoner rehabilitation specialist. Bob Trotta is stationed in Maryland with the Chemical Corps. Fortunately for us he has been able to come into town frequently and can therefore join in with some of our group activities, but we miss his tenor voice at our song group. Another absentee at our group is Hank Le Clercu, who is in the Air Corps. He was in town recently and came down to a group meeting. It was fun seeing him again. We hope to welcome him back soon in both our song and dance group.

Ricky Leighton has left New York for Denver, Colorado on business. He is doing plenty of calling there. We are sorry to lose him.

Married...Eddie Kramer...Benita Lassen and Marc Nearenstone. We miss you at the group meetings, let's hear from you soon.

Exception to the rule of everyone going into services and getting married, is Cy Hertzog who has completed his tour in the Marines and is now studying at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Congratulations, Dutch Van West! No.....it's not a baby, but a sheepskin, from City College

We have some new members in ASDG this year. George Pellicer was a recruit from our Catalonian demonstration. Three other new members are Ellie Cuelli, Donald Nelson and Bob Krebs.

ASDG appeared at a very unique Israeli folk dance festival. It was a competitive dance demonstration, the first of its kind in New York. The Israeli dance groups were competing for a silver loving cup made in Jerusalem. All participating groups received gifts made in Jerusalem.

Although this was a dance contest, we did not compete, but appeared as guest performers. We presented traditional American dances as a contrast to the newer Israeli dances. The judges were May Gadd director of the Country Dance Society, Martha Hill, director of the Dance Society of Juilliard, and Margot Mayo, director of our own group.

On March 22nd we appeared at the Anniversary Celebration of the United Order of True Sisters. This luncheon party was held in the Sert Room of the Waldorf Astoria. When we danced in the Sert Room we were conscious of our Catalan friends.

Renee